

September 6, 2002

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CEREMONY TO BE HELD TO MARK JUSTICE MCMORROW AS FIRST WOMAN CHIEF JUSTICE OF ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT**

SPRINGFIELD, IL — The elevation of Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow, the first woman to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, will be marked by an installation ceremony Monday September 9 at the Supreme Court Building in Springfield.

Justice McMorrow was unanimously elected Chief Justice by her colleagues on the Court to replace Justice Moses W. Harrison II, who retired after nearly 10 years on the Supreme Court and 29 years as a judge in Illinois.

Justice McMorrow's three-year tenure as Chief began September 5.

The Governor, legislative leaders and other dignitaries have been invited to the installation ceremony scheduled for 3 p.m. September 9, the date the Court begins its new term.

"I feel very privileged and honored," said Justice McMorrow. "I deeply admire and respect my colleagues and look forward to working with them to continue to assure the fair administration of justice in Illinois for all persons, and to maintain one of the finest court systems in the country."

Becoming Chief Justice of Illinois is another in a series of firsts for Justice McMorrow in pioneering opportunities for women in the law.

She was the only woman in her graduating class at Loyola University School of Law in 1953 and was elected class president and associate editor of the law review.

She also was the first woman to prosecute major criminal cases in the Cook County State's Attorney's office and in 1992 became the first woman elected to the Illinois Supreme Court.

She was elected a judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1976; was assigned to the Appellate Court in 1985 and was elected to that court in 1986, where she was the first woman to serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Appellate Court.

While sitting on the Supreme Court she has authored 169 majority opinions and 43 dissents. She wrote the opinion for the majority in *Best v. Taylor Machine Works* (1997), which held that so-

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called “tort reform” legislation was unconstitutional because it benefitted special interests to the detriment of those persons who suffer the most serious injuries.

In *Happel v. Wal-Mart Stores Inc.* (2002), she wrote an opinion which improved pharmaceutical safety by imposing a duty on pharmacies to warn individual customers of possible severe side effects if known to the pharmacy.

One of her noteworthy dissents involved the question of holding parents and other social hosts liable for injury and death resulting from minors allowed to drink to the point of intoxication. The majority of the Court found no liability, and Justice McMorrow wrote that result was “an injustice and an outrage.

“Adult social hosts must realize that there are legal ramifications, both civil and criminal, to allowing teenage drunk driving,” Justice McMorrow wrote in the dissent to *Charles v. Siegfried* (1995). “Unless that lesson is taught and learned, we all will suffer the ugly and tragic consequences, whether physical, emotional, social and economic, that are inflicted when minors are permitted to drink.”

Chief Justice McMorrow is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Medal of Excellence from the Loyola University School of Law Alumni Association; the Freedom Award from John Marshall School of Law and the Illinois State Bar Association’s Fellows Award for Distinguished Service to Law and Society.

Chief Justice McMorrow is a past president of the Women’s Bar Association of Illinois and recipient of its highest award, the Myra Bradwell Woman of Achievement Award, named for the first woman lawyer in Illinois.

She is a member or former member of several bar associations and judicial boards and associations.

Chief Justice McMorrow was a faculty adviser at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada, and has often served as a faculty member at Illinois Judicial Conferences. She has lectured extensively in seminars and symposiums for judges, lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists and students, and has been active in community programs.

She is a lifelong resident of Chicago, a widow and the mother of one daughter.

As Chief Justice, Justice McMorrow serves as the chief administrative officer of the statewide judicial system, with supervisory authority over more than 900 judges.

Among other duties, the Chief Justice controls and schedules the Supreme Court’s agenda as to what will be brought for consideration in conference by the Court; assigns cases for proposed opinions; supervises all appointments to Supreme Court committees and also serves as

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chairperson of the Executive Committee of the constitutionally mandated Illinois Judicial Conference. The Conference sets and sponsors much of the judicial education agenda and courses for Illinois judges.

The Chief Justice also serves as the public face of the Court, appearing at many functions as the representative of the Court.